

NOAA's Integrated Water Resource Services - Supporting NIDIS in the Southwest U. S.

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ABSTRACT

Planning for and responding to drought is a major environmental policy issue. "With drought causing between \$6 and \$8 billion a year in direct estimated losses to the U.S. economy and devastating impacts on our society, we cannot overlook the need for science to predict, monitor, and mitigate this phenomenon" (Western Governor's Association (WGA), 2004). A 2004 WGA report recommended the creation of a National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) which would include several components for addressing the drought problem. NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration was named in both the House and Senate legislation to be the lead Federal Agency in coordinating efforts involving NIDIS. NOAA program structure is now undergoing a strategic shift where all NOAA line offices will closely collaborate on significant projects in regional areas. As part of this shift, NOAA is focusing on 4 priority areas, one of them being Integrated Water Resources Services. The new NOAA Western Region is moving ahead on a project in the southwest (beginning in Arizona) that will focus on Water Resources Services in support of the NIDIS (National Integrated Drought Information Service). This will include: (1) hosting partnership workshops in cooperation with the RISA's (Regional Integrated Science Assessments) to help define requirements, (2) working with other water related Federal agencies, (3) focus on improving prediction of water resource information, (4) better incorporation of climate signals into forecasts, and (5) provide high resolution observations and forecasts through the application of distributed modeling.